

Fact Sheet

Methamphetamine Decontamination 2008

Overview:

1. What is meth?

- Highly addictive, man made drug that stimulates the pleasure section of the brain
<http://health.utah.gov/meth/html/Whatismeth/index.html>

2. Why should I be concerned with meth contaminated properties?

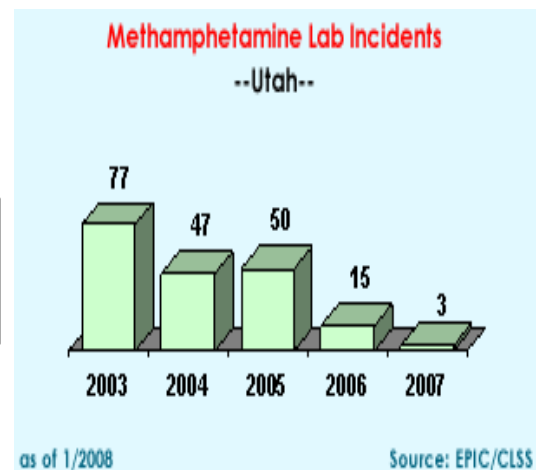
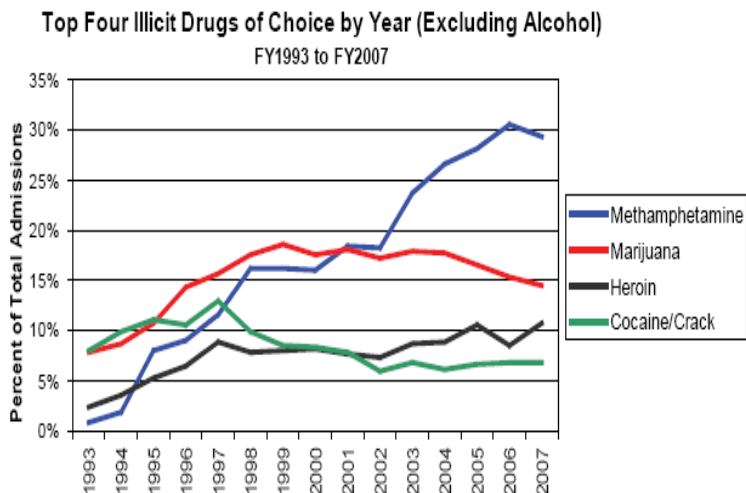
- Meth can be made from household items which are toxic, flammable, and otherwise hazardous in combination
- Labs leave harmful, hazardous chemical residues on building structures
- Every pound of meth produced in a lab leaves 5-6 pounds of toxic waste
- Even just using meth can leave high levels of meth residues
- Brochures for property Owners, Renters, Sellers, Landlords, and Buyers can be found at:

<http://health.utah.gov/meth/html/Decontamination/PropertyTransactions/PropertyTransactions.html>

3. What is the extent of the meth problem in Utah?

- Meth labs have decreased since 2003, but meth use has continued to increase.
- Since 2005, the data from 3 counties*, indicate roughly 305 properties have been remediated for meth contamination.
- As awareness increases and more properties are tested, the number of identified meth contaminated properties is likely to increase.

*Bear River, Salt Lake, and Utah



Health Concerns:

4. What are the health effects of meth exposure? What do we know about long term effects?

- More research is needed on effects of low dose, long term exposure to methamphetamine
- Some symptoms may be associated with exposure to meth include:
 - a. asthma
 - b. pulmonary fibrosis
 - c. upper respiratory complaints
 - d. weight loss
 - e. increased wakefulness
 - f. rapid heart rate
 - g. irritability
 - h. insomnia
 - i. increased body temperature.

<http://health.utah.gov/meth/html/Healthconcerns/AdultEffects.html>

5. What are health effects prenatally, for infants and for small children?

- Exposure to meth during pregnancy may include increased maternal blood pressure, low birth weight, and prematurity. There has not been a significant association with major birth defects and methamphetamine use during pregnancy
- Children can be exposed in the environment through inhalation and absorption through skin
- Often, children are neglected, physical, mentally, emotionally, and/or sexually abused in homes where meth is being used or produced.



<http://health.utah.gov/meth/html/Healthconcerns/Children.html>

6. What level of meth in my home will cause health effects?

- Recent research coming out of California and Colorado confirm that no adverse health effects will result if a home is properly decontaminated to the level required by the State.

Meth in the home:

7. When should I test for meth?

- Recommended to test for meth before property transactions
- Visual inspection:
 - a. large amount of cold tablets
 - b. jars with clear liquid with white or red colored solid on the bottom
 - c. large amounts of batteries
 - d. propane tanks with fittings that have turned blue
 - e. strong smell of urine or other chemicals
 - f. yellow discoloration or staining on walls, floors, drains, sinks, showers, etc.
 - g. unusual burns marks, etc.

<http://health.utah.gov/meth/html/Decontamination/Decondetails.html>

8. What do I do if my property tests positive for meth?

- If home tests positive for meth, you should contact your local health department to discuss next steps in the process.
- If property was a lab, it will be placed on contaminated property list, and must follow the decontamination procedures outlined in the State Rule 392-600.

<http://health.utah.gov/meth/html/Decontamination/Decondetails.html>



9. What is the best way to collect a sample to detect meth?

- Local health departments only accept tests from certified decontamination specialists.
- A list of certified decontamination specialists can be found at <http://www.superfund.utah.gov/docs/ContractorList.pdf>

10. What is the difference in level of contamination between a lab and a home that only had meth use?

- If meth is produced in the home, then generally meth sample test results are very high. Additionally, meth labs introduce many hazardous chemicals into the environment.
- Homes with only meth use often test at lower, but still significant levels of meth present.
- Often it is difficult to distinguish between a lab and a use situation because meth is now being produced in ways where typical visual signs do not occur.
- <http://health.utah.gov/meth/html/Decontamination/AdditionalResources.html>